Ibn Ajiba's commentary on

Ayat al-Kursi

(Quran 2:255)

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ۚ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۚ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۖ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۖ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

“Allah, there is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep. His is all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them and what is behind them, and they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He wills. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth; the preserving of them wearies Him not; He is the Most High, the Most Great.”

(Nuh Keller's translation)

In his commentary, *Al-Bahr al-Madid*, a traditional Sunni and Sufi tafsir, Ibn Ajiba commented:

Allah, there is no god but He, meaning there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, the One, the Unique, who has no partner in His essence, attributes, or actions. ‘The Living’ is the One whose life is eternal, without beginning or end, and it is the source of life for all that exists. ‘The Sustainer’ is the One who sustains and upholds the creation with His power, managing their affairs with His wisdom, and nothing moves or rests except by His will. In it is an indication that the divine essence is described with life and sustenance, negating any imperfection or deficiency. In the esoteric sense, there is an indication that the servant should witness the life of Allah in all things, for He is the source of existence, and the heart of the knower is sustained by His sustenance.

Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him, ‘slumber’ is the lightness of sleep, and ‘sleep’ is its completion, and this negates from Allah any state of negligence or weakness, for He is ever-watchful, ever-aware, and His management of creation is continuous without interruption. In the esoteric sense, this indicates that the divine presence is always manifest, and the servant should be vigilant in his heart, not allowing the slumber of heedlessness to overtake him, so that he remains in constant remembrance of Allah.

To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, meaning He is the sole owner and sovereign of all that exists in the heavens and the earth, whether animate or inanimate, and nothing occurs except by His command. This affirms His absolute dominion and negates any

claim of ownership for other than Him. In the esoteric sense, there is an indication that the servant should surrender his heart and soul to Allah, recognizing that he possesses nothing truly, and all that he has is from Allah's generosity.

Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? This is a rhetorical question affirming that no one can intercede with Allah except by His leave, whether prophets, angels, or others, for intercession is only granted to those whom He permits, and it is a mercy from Him to His servants. In the esoteric sense, this indicates that the servant's approach to Allah is only through Allah's facilitation, and no one reaches the divine presence except by His will, so the servant must seek His permission through obedience and sincerity.

He knows what is before them and what is behind them, meaning He knows what is in their future and their past, encompassing all their affairs, whether apparent or hidden, and nothing is concealed from Him. In the esoteric sense, this indicates that Allah's knowledge encompasses the states of the hearts, their intentions, and their secrets, so the servant should purify his inner self, knowing that Allah is aware of all that he conceals.

And they do not encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills, meaning the creation, whether human, angel, or jinn, cannot grasp any part of Allah's infinite knowledge except what He chooses to reveal to them, for His knowledge is boundless, and their knowledge is limited. In the esoteric sense, this indicates that the servant's knowledge of Allah is only through what Allah grants him, and the knower seeks the unveiling of divine realities through Allah's will, not through his own effort alone.

His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, the Throne is the greatest of Allah's creations, and its extension over the heavens and the earth signifies the vastness of His dominion and the encompassing nature of His power. The scholars have differed about the nature of the Throne, but it is agreed that it is beyond human comprehension, and we affirm it as Allah has described it. In the esoteric sense, the Throne represents the manifestation of divine majesty, and its extension indicates that all creation is under Allah's command, so the servant should witness this majesty in his heart, seeing all things as manifestations of divine power.

And their preservation does not burden Him, meaning the maintenance and sustaining of the heavens and the earth does not cause Him any fatigue or difficulty, for His power is absolute, and His strength is limitless. In the esoteric sense, this indicates that the servant should rely on Allah's strength, not his own, for Allah's sustenance of creation is effortless, and the servant's heart should be free from the burden of worldly concerns by trusting in Allah.

And He is the Most High, the Most Great, 'the Most High' means He is exalted above all creation in His essence, attributes, and actions, and 'the Most Great' means He is greater than

everything, beyond comparison or limitation. This concludes the verse with the affirmation of Allah's transcendence and greatness. In the esoteric sense, there is an indication that the servant should elevate his aspiration to Allah alone, seeking His greatness and humbling himself before His majesty, for He is the ultimate goal of the knower's journey.

In this verse, there is a comprehensive description of Allah's oneness, His attributes, and His sovereignty, and it is called Ayat al-Kursi because it encompasses the foundations of faith and the realities of divine unity. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'Whoever recites Ayat al-Kursi after every prayer, nothing prevents him from entering paradise except death.' In the esoteric sense, this verse is a means of protection for the heart, for it establishes the servant in the witnessing of divine unity, guarding him from the whisperings of Satan and the distractions of the self. The knower recites it with the heart's presence, seeking the unveiling of divine realities and the annihilation of the self in the presence of Allah's greatness.